

115 layoffs set at Uniroyal here

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The Gramm-Rudman federal budget reduction bill will become a grim reality early next month for 115 employees at the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant south of Joliet. Their employment will be terminated between March 7 and 13.

The workers will be let go by Uniroyal Chemical Corp., longtime operating contractors at the plant, U.S. Rep. George M. O'Brien, R-Joliet, said he learned Tuesday afternoon.

Because this represents a layoff of one-third of the present work force of 298 employees at Uniroyal, O'Brien said he would be checking into the situation further today. The Gramm-Rudman bill calls for a 4.3 percent reduction in some domestic and military federal spending. O'Brien said he would be questioning today whether the Gramm-Rudman bill was really responsible for the cuts at Uniroyal and if so why one-third of the force was being laid off. He said he wanted to be assured that the Joliet plant was being treated fairly.

The Joliet plant reportedly is

one of 20 military-contracted facilities affected by the one-third reduction in force, O'Brien's office said.

Ralph Miller, Joliet Uniroyal plant manager, this morning verified the staff reduction figure. He said the U.S. Army has "elected to be heavy on us."

Some of the workers to be terminated are recent employees while others have been with Uniroyal for about 20 years, Miller said. Retirement benefits will be available to those with the required years of service and depending on their age, he said.

Miller said Uniroyal would continue as operating contractors of the standby plant. He said the plant here is part of the reserve mobilization base in case of an emergency. He said security, fire protection and utility maintenance would continue because of the storage of explosives at the facility.

Employees of Honeywell Inc. will not be affected, a spokesman at Honeywell said today. Honeywell reactivated the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant in 1981 and is producing ammunition for the U.S. Army. About 225 are employed by Honeywell.